

CLAIMS

1. A method of preparing a postman's walk in a plurality of sorting passes with mail items including both letters (1) and large-format flat items or "flats" (4), said
5 method being characterized in that it consists in the following steps:

- subjecting the letters to a first sorting pass in a first sorting machine (2) having a certain number of first sorting outlets (3) and configured for a certain
10 sorting plan;
- subjecting the flats to a first sorting pass in a second sorting machine (5) including second sorting outlets (6) that correspond to respective ones of the first sorting outlets, the second sorting machine being
15 configured for the same sorting plan as the first sorting machine, and the sorting plan for the sorting machines being designed so that a set of delivery points (15) of the postman's walk are assigned to each first sorting outlet or to each second sorting outlet respectively;
- 20 - grouping together the mail items coming from each corresponding first and second sorting outlet to form as many groups (7) of mail items as there are first or second sorting outlets; and
- subjecting the groups of mail items to a second
25 sorting pass using a set (21) of trays (8) as follows:
 - a) for a group of mail items, assigning to the trays respective ones of the delivery points from the set of delivery points assigned to the sorting outlets from which the mail items of the group of
30 mail items come; and
 - b) distributing the mail items from the group of mail items into the various trays as a function of the delivery points assigned to the trays, and repeating steps a) and b) for each other group of
35 mail items.

2. A method according to claim 1, in which the sorting machines are configured with a sorting plan whereby respective ones of consecutive delivery points on the postman's walk are assigned to the various successive
5 sorting outlets.

3. A method according to claim 1, in which the sorting machines are configured with a sorting plan whereby a plurality of consecutive delivery points on the postman's
10 walk are assigned to each sorting outlet.

4. A method according to any one of claims 1, 2, or 3, in which, in order to distribute a group of mail items into the trays, each tray is caused to display information
15 representing the delivery point assigned to the tray.

5. A method according to any preceding claim, in which, during distribution of the mail items into the trays, the mail items are bagged.
20

6. A method according to claim 5, in which the operation of bagging the mail items consists in bagging all of the mail items coming from the same tray in the same bag (7).

25 7. Apparatus for implementing the method according to any one of claims 1 to 6, said apparatus comprising a first sorting machine (2) for sorting letters, a second sorting machine (5) for sorting flats, and a set of trays (8), each of which is equipped with information display device
30 (12) for displaying information representing a delivery point on a postman's walk.

8. Apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising a bagging device for bagging mail items (16).
35